



US sets its sights on Venezuela's oil

• Former Venezuelan ruler due in New York court today on narco-trafficking charges • Ex-VP strikes defiant tone after being sworn in as interim leader • Trump boasts US will take the country's riches; casts doubt on Nobel laureate opposition leader's ability to lead • Rubio says oil embargo to be enforced by US Navy ships • Pakistan calls for restraint, end to crisis

NEW YORK / CARACAS: Venezuela's toppled leader was in a New York detention centre on Sunday, as Washington signaled it was work with the existing Venezuelan leadership, after an unprecedented military operation to snatch Nicolas Maduro left the region teetering on the edge of chaos. The image of the 63-year-old Maduro blindfolded and handcuffed en route to the US has stunned Venezuelans and was Washington's most controversial intervention in Latin America since the invasion of Panama 37 years ago. The Venezuelan strongman is due to appear in a Manhattan court on Monday.

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At home, Maduro allies were still in charge and have denounced his "kidnapping" as part of an imperialist oil grab.

Streets were far quieter than usual as Venezuelans anxiously discussed what would come next. Some stocked up on essentials but many simply hunkered indoors.

"There is fear and uncertainty," Trump said the US would for now manage the South American nation of about 30 million people, plus its oil reserves — the largest in the world.

"We're going to be taking a tremendous amount of wealth from the ground," Trump said.

"We will run the country until such time as we can do a

safe, proper and judicious transition," he told a press conference at his Mara-Lago resort.

Uncertainty in Caracas

Venezuelans faced deep uncertainty regarding their country's leadership after Maduro's snatching sparked a chaotic scramble for power.

Although the nation's top court swore in Vice President Delcy Rodríguez as the interim leader, President Donald Trump insisted the US would effectively run the country.

He suggested a collaboration with Rodríguez, claiming she expressed willingness to cooperate with American demands, a narrative she publicly contradicted while surrounded by high-ranking officials in Caracas.

Trump asserted that Rodríguez, a 56-year-old attorney and Maduro loyalist, was sworn in per the constitution but would operate under US terms to facilitate a transition.

"She's essentially willing to do what we think is necessary to make Venezuela great again," Trump told reporters. He added that Rodríguez spoke at length with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, reportedly telling him, "We'll do whatever you need".

However, appearing on state television, Rodríguez struck a defiant tone. She did not broadcast an inauguration ceremony but stood flanked by military commanders and civilian officials to condemn the US operation as a flagrant



VENEZUELA'S former ruler Nicolas Maduro is seen in Drug Enforcement Administration custody in New York; while (right) supporters of the ousted leader stage a protest in Caracas.—Reuters/AFP



violation of the United Nations charter.

"There is only one president in this country, and his name is Nicol s Maduro," Rodríguez said, demanding the release of Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. "History and justice will make the extremists who promoted this armed aggression pay."

'Second wave'

While Trump cited cooperation, Rubio offered a stricter assessment during Sunday news show appearances. Speaking to ABC, Rubio stated

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Trump 'threatens' Mexico, Cuba, Colombia next

Monitoring Desk

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump issued blunt warnings to the leaders of Colombia, Mexico and Cuba hours after US forces captured Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, signalling that the operation could precede a broader regional confrontation.

Speaking from his Mara-Lago club and in a televised interview, Trump characterised his actions as necessary for regional stability while directing personal invective at Latin American

heads of state who opposed the operation.

He specifically targeted Colombian President Gustavo Petro with a warning to "watch his a***" and asserted that drug cartels have seized control of the Mexican government.

Trump's harshest rhetoric addressed Petro, a vocal critic of the US military operation in Venezuela. Trump accused the Colombian leader of facilitating drug trafficking into the United States.

"He has cocaine mills, he has factories

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Pakistan, China reaffirm bond amid regional tensions

• Foreign Minister Dar, his Chinese counterpart co-chair 7th Strategic Dialogue in Beijing • Both sides agree to mark 75 years of diplomatic ties with year-long celebrations • Vice Premier hails Islamabad's consistent support for Beijing on issues of core interest

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: As tensions simmer in the region and further afield, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Sunday termed the Pakistan-China friendship "vital" for regional peace and stability as they co-chaired the 7th round of the Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue in Beijing.

Mr Dar arrived in Beijing on Saturday at Mr Wang's invitation, primarily to co-chair the strategic dialogue.

Following the talks, the Foreign Office said in a statement: "Highlighting the salience of the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, both leaders reaffirmed that Pakistan-China friendship is vital for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and for the two countries."

The two sides also agreed to enhance coordination at bilateral and multilateral forums, the statement added.



DAR and Wang Yi unveil the logo marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between their countries.—X/@ForeignOfficePK

The two leaders reviewed the entire spectrum of Pakistan-China relations, and discussed key regional and global issues.

They also exchanged views on the China-Pakistan Econ-

omic Corridor (CPEC), trade, multilateral cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

75th anniversary

"The two leaders also agreed to celebrate the 75th anniver-

sary of the establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations," the FO added.

In a separate statement, the FO said Mr Dar and Mr Wang jointly unveiled the logo for the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties, "marking the start of year-long celebrations to commemorate this historic milestone in a befitting and memorable manner".

Mr Dar, who also serves as deputy prime minister, held meetings with other Chinese officials in Beijing earlier in the day, with exchanges mainly focusing on bilateral ties. Among those he met was Chinese Executive Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang.

The FO said the two leaders "reaffirmed their shared commitment to further deepening the Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership", adding that Mr Ding appreciated Pakistan's consistent support for China on issues of core interest.

Both leaders noted the

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Four KP policemen martyred in separate attacks

By Ghulam Mursalin Marwat and Muhammad Waseem Khan

LAKKI MARWAT / BANNU: Four police personnel, including three traffic cops were martyred in firing by unknown armed men in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat and Bannu districts on Sunday.

Lakki police spokesperson Qudratullah said that

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three traffic policemen were on duty near the Dil Begu Khel area when unidentified gunmen, riding on a motorcycle, opened fire on them.

Ticketing officer in-charge Jalal Khan, Azizullah and Abdullah died on the spot.

The bodies of the martyred policemen were later moved to Naurang Hospital, while police launched a search operation in the area to nab the attackers.

Funeral prayers of the

martyred traffic policemen were later offered at the Lakki Marwat Police Lines. Police and district administration officers, bereaved family members and residents of the area attended the prayers.

Separately, in Bannu, a policeman was martyred in firing by unidentified attackers in the Kashfi Khel area of the district, spokesperson for the Bannu DPO, Asif Hasan, told Dawn.

He said that martyred constable Rashid Khan was leaving his home for work on Sunday morning when some armed assailants, who were on a motorcycle, opened fire, killing him on the spot.

After the incident, a large contingent of police reached the scene, cordoned off the area, and collected evidence, the spokesperson said, adding that a search operation has been launched in the area to arrest the attackers.

President Asif Ali Zardari, PM Shehbaz Sharif and KP Chief Minister

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After 'hinting' at talks, KP CM says he'll go by Imran's instructions

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: After reports surfaced claiming that he is ready to hold talks with the establishment on provincial matters and improve ties, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Sunday clarified that his "only stance" was to implement PTI founder Imran Khan's directives to run his province and prepare for the party's street movement.

In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, the KP chief minister wrote that he had "only one stance".

"My leader [Mr Khan] has directed me to prepare for a street movement, along with running the administrative affairs of my province," he added.

"God willing, I will implement these directives in letter and spirit. Any other news attributed to me is someone's personal assumption."

Earlier, media reports also quoted Mr Afridi as saying that the PTI founder had not instructed him on anything regarding talks with the establishment and that the former premier had assigned the task to opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan's (TTAP) chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Senator Allama Raja Nasir.

The reported remarks were made during his interaction with journalists in

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ON OTHER PAGES



Double deckers on Karachi roads

Newly-launched red double decker buses have appeared on the roads of Karachi, with many queuing up to ride the new service out of necessity or curiosity. Riders of the new buses had lots to say about the dearth of public transport in the city, but were hopeful about the prospects of the latest transit mode. **Page 12**



7,000 take part in Karachi Marathon

Israr Khattak and Sara Lodhi clinch the men's and women's titles in the third edition of the Karachi Marathon featuring as many as 7,000 runners from across Pakistan and 120 contestants from 25 other countries. Khattak successfully defended his title covering the 42km in just under three hours. Sara, in her maiden appearance, crossed the finish line in just over 3 hours 33 mins. **Page 18**

Plus... BUSINESS & FINANCE

After off-loading spree, new desk to guide air travellers

• 'Pre-departure facilitation desks' set up in 11 FIA zonal offices across the country • Staff will brief passengers on required documentation, how much currency to keep, etc • Will cater to both Pakistani and foreign travellers

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has set up pre-departure facilitation desks at all its zonal offices nationwide to assist international travellers, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Sunday, following widespread complaints over passenger off-loading at airports.

The move comes after around 66,154 passengers were offloaded last year despite holding valid documents, particularly at Lahore and Karachi airports, amid a post-2024 Greece boat tragedy crackdown on migrant smuggling, which claimed several Pakistani lives.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered the formation of a special committee to probe the frequent offloading of travellers, which has triggered growing concern and criticism from affected passengers.

Taking to his X account, Mr Naqvi wrote: "Pleased to share that the Federal Investigation Agency has launched Pre-Departure Facilitation Desks across all zonal offices with immediate effect."

According to the minister, the initiative aims to provide guidance and assistance to international travellers on immigration procedures and clearances, ensuring a smoother and more hassle-free travel experience.

The desks have been established in eleven zones — including the Islamabad zonal office in Sector G-6 — and will be accessible for intending international travellers, as well as through helplines and email services.

An FIA spokesperson told Dawn the desks will be operational for international travellers — even over the weekend — with experienced immigration staff deputed to facilitate citizens.

"The immigration staff, headed by the

assistant director and assisted by an inspector and a sub-inspector, will be available for citizens to provide them with details of visa documents required to travel, which visa is needed, a return ticket and how much currency they can keep with them, among other details," he said.

The spokesperson said the facilitation desks have been set up at FIA zonal offices for international travellers — both locals and foreigners — seeking travel-related information, with immigration staff available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Sunday.

"Main zonal offices are located across the country, including Islamabad serving the federal capital territory, Karachi covering Sindh, Lahore covering Punjab, Peshawar covering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Quetta covering Balochistan. Zonal offices are also located in

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A SIGN displayed at Karachi airport provides travellers with contact information for the new pre-departure facilitation desk.—Dawn